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Luther Seminary

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Concord



Voices in the Silence

Letter From the Editor

With the blossoming spring surrounding us, it is hard to think about anything but the quickly approaching summer and (for some of us) the temporary release from school work. The final crunch will begin for us soon, and anything but our school books and papers will seem so distant. So for now we enjoy the spring, the chirping of the birds, and the smells of blossoms on the wind. But there is so much more going on here at Luther than the appearance flowers and the opening of windows. This month, The Concord wanted to hear from voices that break the silence, voices that come from places we sometimes would rather not think about. With all the beauty surrounding us in this fresh spring, we wanted to look for beauty in places where it is unexpected. This month we will hear from those who work with sexual assault awareness, The Stigma Project, prison ministry, and many others. It is our hope that this issue illuminates the beauty of reaching into dark places to bring out life, especially when it seems like life there is impossible. It seems like the perfect theme for this Easter season.

Enjoy this spring, fellow Luther students. And also enjoy the many different, astounding, and silence breaking places our ministry will take us. That is what we are here for, to minister to others and to break the silence, no matter how we do it.

~Julia Olson
Editor in Chief 2015-2016

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Reflections on the Crossing Bridges: MN to Selma March

by Carrie Carroll
Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment, Dean of Students

During the week before the Selma march, I spoke in chapel. I want to share my words again here to give you a sense of why I feel the need to do something.

I have listened to the speeches of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr while he was in Selma and have been struck by two themes. First, he calls for the white power structure of the city of Selma to take responsibility for everything that Jim Clark (the sheriff of Dallas County) did in the city to hurt, marginalize, and even kill the protesters. The power structure has a responsibility for the actions of the people whom they hire; they have a responsibility to see and to know what was happening in their city. But they can also turn away and place blame only at the feet of Jim Clark.

I am in the white power structure of Luther Seminary and in other places that I lead and serve. In this role, I can choose to narrow my responsibility and only look to my own actions. I can place blame for shortcomings or injustices at the feet of others. Or, I can hear the words of the Rev. Dr. and realize that I must take responsibility for both my own actions and for the actions of the institutions and structures that I lead. Jim Clark was allowed to do what he did during Bloody Sunday by those in power. He led in a place and time where the status quo was to treat black people as disposable, as animals, as less than.

Is this different across the country today? Or are we still treating some of our brothers and sisters in this same way?

Another theme in Dr. King's speech is to take action. He preached that a person dies when she refuses to stand up for that which is right, for justice. He dies when he refuses to take a stand for what is true. King called the people to stand up amid horses, billy clubs, police dogs, and tear gas to let the world know that they were determined to be free.

King, just like Jesus, calls me to take action. Jesus calls us to see the injustice that has been done to our

family and to tend to it. Think of the sacrifices made during the civil rights movement and in Selma. People were willing to give their lives to stand up for what is right.

What does scripture call us to do? "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Jesus asks us to do things that we all can do: feed the hungry, greet the stranger, and provide clothing to the naked. We live in the second worst state in the country for people of color when it comes to education, employment, and wage gaps.

I feel the call to do more. God calls me to see God in each person I encounter. I need to open my heart and be present in the muckiness of our broken world. I need to use my power and privilege to raise awareness of injustice, inequality, and education and employment gaps. I need to get involved in making Minnesota a better place to live for all that live here.

I need to march.

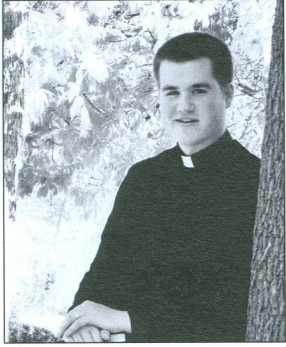
On Sunday, March 8th I marched with about 1500 people from the Minnesota State Capitol to Central Presbyterian Church. We marched to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights Marches and to recommit ourselves to the ongoing work needed to end voter suppression, to close the income and education gaps, and to make this state and this country a better place for all people.

How are you responding to God's call to tend to our family? How are you taking action and responsibility to make this world, this state, this community, this seminary, our Church a better place?

Are you marching?



by Jonathan Rundquist
MDiv Middler



resources at our fingertips, and the goal of attaining a graduate or post-graduate degree. God has called us to be here, with our professors and classmates, for a reason. That reason may be different for all of us. Again, every one of us has a story to tell.

My story is one of poverty. My brothers and I lived our entire school lives in poverty, with our parents barely surviving paycheck to paycheck in our tiny house they originally bought in 1995 for \$6,500. Twenty years later, \$6,500 is less than a year's rent in Sandgren. I've never been homeless, but I've been darn close. Last year, 2013 was the first year of my life that I had not lived under the poverty line.

So, I understand poverty. I've lived it. I am writing this article to show you that I lived in poverty all my life, and I am here in spite of it. Not only am I here in spite of poverty; I am here in seminary to help quell the tide of it.

"For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me." (Matthew 26:11 NRSV)

Jesus had just sat down at the table with Simon the leper, when a woman poured very expensive ointment all over him. His disciples chided the woman for pouring the ointment over Jesus' head and not selling it for the poor; but Jesus told the disciples that he was about to die, and this was preparation for his burial. Jesus goes on to be betrayed, arrested, hung on a cross, and ultimately die on that cross. SPOILER ALERT, Jesus rises again on the third day to save us

all by grace which is freely given and so on and so forth...you know the story.

Now, why not sell the ointment? Why don't the impoverished sell their TVs and refrigerators to buy their food rather than take from the government? Once one sells the TV, they eat dinner for one night; but now they're out a TV and hungry the next morning. Sell the ointment, and the poor eat for a meal or two. What then, was Jesus' point?

Reading the verse again, as you probably have already, it could look very heartless to say that the poor are ever-present, so forget them and worry about Jesus...OR...You could look at it a different way. What if Jesus was telling us to actually do something about the poor in the name of Christ, the One who called us to this place?

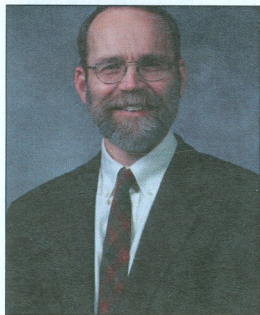
Seriously, how many of us have gone to help at soup kitchens or homeless shelters, or donated clothes and so on - to make us feel good that we're doing something to brighten someone's day? How many of us have given the guy on the street holding a sign a couple bucks or a gift card? We do what we can, but what if we did more than the 'every little bit helps' mantra. What if, instead of doing that good deed for the day, we, as future leaders of the Church made radical change happen in our communities, to stem the tide of poverty, to truly live as Jesus did? Forget the caveman diet - strip ourselves of the internal barriers that prevent us from making real change happen - to one day rid ourselves of the reality of poverty. What would Jesus do?

Upcoming VOCA Meetings!

We meet approximately every-other Thursday during lunch (11:30am-12:30pm) in the Dining Room. Look for Kristina Hill or me and our VOCA sign to come join in the conversation. Our next meeting will be April 9. Updates and announcements are available via VOCA's and Luther's Community Life Facebook pages and MyLutherNet, You're welcome to stop by.

What Does a Dean Do?

by Craig Koester
Academic Dean



People often ask how I like being dean. The question is simple enough. And I can say that yes, I like it just fine. But of course there is more to it than that. And for me, the larger question is what serving as dean might mean.

Much of my role is ensuring that the people who are Luther Seminary have the support they need to serve effectively. The focus is student learning, because that is central to what we do. We are a place devoted to preparing people for service in the church and in God's world. So whatever I do, and we do, has to support that.

In personal terms, the dean's role has deep continuity with what I have been doing here for years. My primary location has been teaching New Testament, which I love to do. What I have learned as a teacher is that the success of any course is never apparent at the end of the semester. I can only gauge the value of the experience by asking what happens after the course is over and students are actually serving in ministry. If the work we did in class prepared them to serve well, then the course was a success. If the course did not prepare them well, then something needed to change – and that was the creative challenge.

But in another sense, serving as dean has brought a significant change. It has meant moving from mainly teaching (with some committee and administrative work alongside) to mainly administrative work (with a little teaching if things go as planned next year). Now the creative challenge is not only discerning what the students in my own classes need. It means asking what faculty and staff members need in order to support student learning. My work is really about their work.

I am convinced that the creativity of the faculty is essential for us as a community of learning. We count

on faculty engagement with new questions in their teaching and scholarship, and on their willingness to keep asking what the gospel means for the contexts in which we live. We also count on the work of staff members, who provide opportunities for growth in contextual learning and lifelong learning, with resources through the library, with all the other processes needed to make the institution function. Each one contributes to the work of the whole community.

So a rewarding aspect of the dean's role is helping faculty and staff discern how to best live out their vocations in this place. As Paul said, "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone" (1 Cor 12:4-6). The many and varied contributions that people make are essential for the wellbeing of the whole.

The support role is also connected to the leadership role. A dean does have significant opportunities to help lead the seminary. I say "help lead" because leadership here has to be deeply collaborative. The president and others who oversee major areas of our work share that approach. If we are educating leaders for Christian communities, then we need to work closely with each other to make this a community of learning.

I have spent most of my adult life at Luther. It's been a major commitment. The reason I do it is because the more basic commitment is to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church that proclaims it. It's a blessing to serve.

STUDENT GROUPS!

The Concord can be a mouthpiece for you, too! Let us know what's going on, or what's new and exciting about your group, or even write an article about your group and how it's serving the Luther community.

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The Health of the Seminary: Accreditation

by Andy Keck
Director of Library Services



It was Friday the Thirteenth - my birthday - and I received a helpful message from my doctor to set up an appointment for a checkup in order to conduct the usual battery of tests for a man my age. At the checkup, there was also an interview: Are you experiencing any pain? Do you have concerns about your health? How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you eat? How much water do you drink? How many minutes a day do you exercise? At the end, my doctor pulled all of this together to describe my current state of health but she also points out some new things I should be doing or tracking more carefully, working with me to develop future goals for how many minutes I should exercise or how many servings of fruits and vegetables I should eat.

Accreditation is like going to a doctor's check-up except it is a peer-based process and for most of higher education, happens every 10 years. Accreditation is the primary means of educational quality assurance and recognized for federal financial aid as well as credits and degrees by other institutions and denominations. The Higher Learning Commission defines standards for healthy institutions of higher education in the midwest region of the United States that includes everything from state universities to community colleges. The Association of Theological Schools defines healthy seminaries and theological education within the United States and Canada. Our current state of health is compared to peer-established standards of a healthy higher education institution or seminary program much like various medical associations might develop health standards for cholesterol levels or kidney function. Instead of bloodwork and EKGs, we provide detailed institutional data about finances, programs, staffing, faculty, enrollment, graduations, and placements.

The self-study and recent accreditation visits were

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opportunities for us to compare ourselves to the standards and describe our current state of health. Our accreditors also use the visit to conduct an interview: Are we experiencing any pain? Do we have any concerns about our health? Are we taking in a good balance of tuition and gifts? How many and what kinds of students are we enrolling? What are students learning and how do we know it makes a difference after graduation? How well do our faculty contribute to their professions, the church, and the public?

In the coming weeks and months, our accreditors will take all the information provided in our self-study and accreditation visits to develop a report that details their findings, overall diagnosis, and recommendations. As we receive our official statements of diagnosis and recommendations in June, I trust that our accreditors will confirm our own self-diagnosis, encourage us in treatments that we have already started, and potentially add other things to do or track more carefully.

A big thanks to faculty, staff, students, board, and alumni who pulled together to create the self-studies and participate in the accreditation visits, especially Drew Yackel, Carrie Carroll, Gerri Stepanek, Jason Misselt, Craig Koester, Bonnie Raquet, and Bill Frame/Michael Morrow. This was not a task for the faint of heart! We will keep our community informed as we receive the reports and recommendations from our accreditors. As we receive their diagnosis and treatment plans, I also look forward to working with all in addressing their concerns.



Welcoming Everyone's Gifts:
Equipping Congregations to Include
Children and Youth with Disabilities

An ecumenical, interfaith conference offering
practical tools and strategies to meet the challenges
of staff and volunteers seeking to include all
young people in the life of their congregation.

Friday, April 17, 2015 - 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 18 - 8:30 to 1:00 p.m.

Valley Community Presbyterian Church, 3100 N. Lilac Drive, Golden Valley, MN 55422
763-588-0831 www.valleychurch.net

Cost- \$25 - Scholarships Available

Includes refreshments on Friday evening and a light lunch on Saturday.

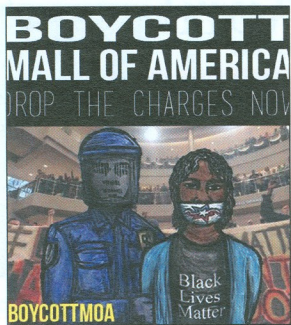
Register online by going to www.eventbrite.com. In the search box in the upper left hand corner enter disabilities inclusion conference. This will take you to registration.

Register by phone with Risa Anderson at 651-357-1150 ext. 254

Luther Coming Events - April						
day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Satu
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	<div>Sexual Assault Awareness Week</div> <div>11:30a DRBC Meeting 4:30pm</div> <div>Luther Brass Rehearsal</div>	<div>Sexual Assault Awareness Week 11a Chapel; Dr. Marie Fortune</div> <div>11:30 Knit and Crochet Group</div> <div>11:30 Emmaus 11:45 Centering Prayer 12p</div> <div>Table de Conversation</div> <div>4:30 Choir 7p Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune Lecture</div>	<div>Sexual Assault Awareness Week</div>	<div>Sexual Assault Awareness Week</div>	<div>Sexual Assault Awareness Week</div> <div>11:30a Pray and Break Bread: Twin Cities LGBTQIA Advocacy 11:30a</div> <div>Luther Book Club</div>	
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	<div>11:30 DRBC Meeting 4:30pm</div> <div>Luther Brass Rehearsal</div> <div>6pm Call Me Kuchu Screening</div>	<div>11:30 Knit and Crochet Group</div> <div>11:45 Centering Prayer 12p</div> <div>Table de Conversation</div> <div>4:30 Choir 7p Rutlen Lecture on Faith & Creation</div>				
	27	28	29	30	01	02
	<div>11:30 DRBC Meeting</div> <div>4:30pm Luther Brass Rehearsal</div>	<div>11:30 Knit and Crochet Group</div> <div>11:30 Emmaus</div> <div>11:45 Centering Prayer 12p</div> <div>Table de Conversation</div> <div>4:30 Choir</div>				
	04	05	06	07	08	09
	<div>11:30 DRBC Meeting</div> <div>4:30pm Luther Brass Rehearsal</div>	<div>11:30 Knit and Crochet Group</div> <div>11:45 Centering Prayer 12p</div> <div>Table de Conversation</div> <div>4:30 Choir</div>	<div>Community Meal</div>			

#BlackLivesMatter – Come and See

by Arthur Murray
MDiv Senior



After attending the morning events at Luther

Seminary on Martin Luther King Day this January, I headed down to the #BlackLivesMatter ReclaimMLK March at the Capitol. I don't consider myself an activist and have not taken part

in many marches before, but something compelled me to go join the crowd. While walking towards the march, I fell in step alongside a young mom who was walking with her eight year old son. He was asking why we were walking and she explained to him: "because we live in a democracy and we need to show up and let our voices be heard to make sure things stay on the right track." I took note.

Everything I had seen on the news about the #BlackLivesMatter movement made me think it might be a little dangerous. I had heard about the occasional episodes of looting and had seen the tense-looking stand-offs between police and protesters in Ferguson and all around the country. I wanted to see for myself. I needed to know if I could trust the images that I had seen on television.

The march was long. We walked close to four hours and by the time we gathered on the steps of the Capitol, it was dark. My impressions throughout were of solidarity, love, and good intention all fueled by an impatience that it is time for equal justice for all - that we have waited long enough. The crowd was a mix of people of every background, culture, age, and walk of life. We sang, we chanted, we lay down in the street, we got up, and we kept walking. At the end of the march, in the shadow of the Capitol, we gathered around the family of a young black man who was shot and killed by police in St. Paul just a few days earlier. Two thousand people participated in a group

hug around the family and then spontaneously sang "Amazing Grace." It was a sorrowful and profound moment.

I had noticed the television cameras from a local news channel that had been following the march all day. When I got home that night, I turned on the 10 o'clock news. Even though I thought the coverage was reasonably representative (they covered the vigil as well as the march), I was surprised at my reaction. Though I was one of the marchers, when I watched an image of people marching and chanting on television, I did not feel the love, the solidarity and compassion that I felt when I was there. Rather the feeling I noticed inside myself was still "Danger!"

What is it about me that causes me to feel threatened by these images? Is a love-fueled, peaceful protest in the face of injustice something that doesn't translate well on TV? Have I been programmed to view passionate, organized, non-violent crowds as a threat?

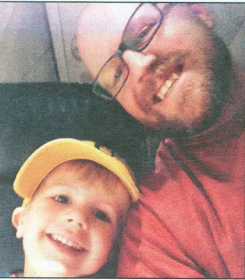
I don't know what the answer is, though I suspect that my sheltered, privileged upbringing as a white man from western Canada has something to do with my gut emotional responses. How could it not?

One thing I do know: I am glad I responded to the Facebook invitation to join the march. It is not only easy to stand on the side lines and cast judgment from the comfort of our couches, it is inevitable. We are all formulating opinions at every moment about every news headline and issue that we encounter, whether we want to or not. Being present gave me an entirely different narrative from the one that came across on TV. #BlackLivesMatter is a movement that gives voice to a lament that has always been present but is now coming to the fore. It is not going anywhere. The call for justice will continue until justice is won. Join the struggle. All are welcome. Come and see.

To get involved "like" Black Lives Matter Minneapolis on Facebook. There is a wealth of excellent information and instructive articles on the page.

Sexual Violence Prevention: A Men's Issue

by Jeff Olsen-Krengal
Associate Dean of Students



When did you realize you had a voice? When did you realize you had something to say? When did you realize you had something to contribute? When did you make the decision to take action?

I realized about 5 years ago that I had something to say, something to contribute. I needed to step into the issue of sexual violence in our society, and do something about it in my community. I needed to raise my voice, my mind, and my heart to this issue because I have friends and colleagues who are survivors of sexual violence. I also needed to do something about it because I was perpetuating it. That's right. I was responsible for perpetuating sexual violence in my community because I wasn't raising my voice and taking action to prevent it.

In addition, I am a privileged person. I might be the most privileged person that I know. I am a white, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied, Christian male. I have not been required to think about those identities as I go through my day. The fact of my privilege combined with the hurt and pain that I have witnessed as a result of sexual violence is why I work to prevent it from happening.

I believe sexual violence prevention is, in large part, a men's issue. Why? Because we are the main perpetrators of sexual violence, plain and simple. We are responsible for committing a large majority of sexual violence so we have a responsibility to stop it. As men, we are socialized at an early age in what society demands from us as men. Michael Kimmel, in his book, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*, writes about the various messages that

men receive during their development from adolescence to adulthood. Kimmel describes this period as sort of a 'suspended animation between boyhood and manhood' where 'the dependency and lack of autonomy of boyhood and the sacrifice and responsibility of manhood.' In *Guyland*, men engage in risky behaviors as feats of bravado and strength while trying to conceal any real sense of identity, emotion, or weakness.

So where do we start? How do we engage men in this issue? Men's voices have long been absent in this conversation about sexual violence prevention. Bystander education is one approach that could provide a pathway to achieving some positive change. Jackson Katz is renowned lecturer, filmmaker, and activist who has been working with men around the world to change the narrative for men in sexual violence prevention. Katz acknowledges male privilege and challenges men to raise their voice alongside women in prevention work.

(Side note: I recognize I am using a gender binary here and that gender is a spectrum.). Bystander education taps into the networks and culture of men to engage one another in preventing violence (and abuse, harassment, and sexism as well).

This is challenging work and we have much to accomplish. I believe men have a large responsibility to prevent sexual violence in our community. It is time for men's voices to join women's voices in advocating an end to sexual violence. Women have been speaking out and advocating for change for quite some time. It matters what we as men say, and it matters what we do as well. I encourage men to find opportunities for involvement and leadership in preventing sexual violence. One step we all can take is to participate in the upcoming Sexual Violence Awareness Week activities the week of April 14-17. Join the conversation as #LSsaysNOMORE.



The Race Church Change Award at Luther

by Amy Marga

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology



Race. Church. Change. Or should it be “Reconciliation?” Or something else, like, “Church Transformation?” These are the questions that the Race, Church, Change Award committee discussed last year as we wondered whether it was time to update the name of an award that Luther Seminary

has been giving to outstanding Christian leaders since 1989.

Luther Seminary scouts out leaders from across the nation who have worked tirelessly and “heroically” within their faith communities for racial justice, intercultural understanding, and social transformation.

We wondered: should we make the award sound catchier, more modern?

We began thinking of all those who are working within faith communities to bring solidarity and reconciliation to diverse groups of people. Many of these heroes work nearby, like Pastor Kelly Chatman who works across the Black and White divide in North Minneapolis, or the Reverend Vivian Nelsen Jenkins, who works in many different ways to bridge the racial divide. These leaders take risks to reach across race and ethnicity for the sake of God’s mission.

We’ll keep the word “Race,” we decided. It focuses us. It reminds us that as Americans, we live in a country with a history of racism, and where racial barriers are part of the frontlines of God’s mission of reconciliation.

We wondered about the word, “Church”? Did it sound too stuffy?

Then we looked at the amazing work within congregations by past awardees like Pastor Carol Stumme, who helped a fading congregation in Minneapolis raise up Hmong leaders to build what is now a thriving congregation. And Pastor Jane Buckley-Farlee, who is building Somali and American relationships in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. Despite

its institutional ring, the word “Church” points us beyond a set of four walls. It points us to Jesus among us, whether that is two, three, twenty, or a thousand. “Church” is that place – any place – where the Holy Spirit gathers neighbors together for the sake of being sent into the world that God loves.

Finally, “Change.” Was it too vague, we wondered?

But recalling our recent RCC Awardees, Carolyn Jewett and Pastor Steve Jerbi of All Peoples Gathering Lutheran Church, we realized that “Change” is exactly what Luther Seminary is looking to celebrate – and to work towards. Pastor Jerbi and Lay Leader Jewett are heroes of change on many levels. Their Christian leadership in a struggling Milwaukee neighborhood involves serving meals, tending a community garden, and training youth to work on neighborhood projects. This is real change in the mission of a congregation. Luther Seminary learns from them about the Ministry of Gardens and the Witness of Inner-City Youth.

Moreover, the strong lay leadership of Carolyn Jewett at All People’s is also a change in the way Christians think about public Christian leadership. Jewett stands in a long, strong tradition of the Lutheran priesthood of all believers. We decided that, indeed, “Change” is the right word for this award.

Race. Church. Change. Luther Seminary prays for a spirit of change, courage, and imagination as we become a twenty-first-century seminary.

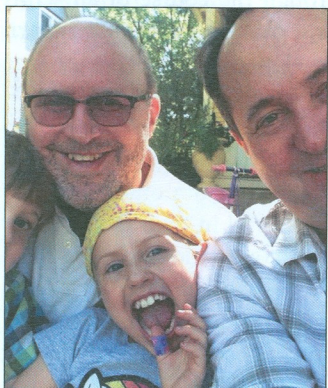
This year, we are presenting the Race, Church, Change award to Rev. Iris de León-Hartshorn, director of transformative peacemaking for the Mennonite Church USA. Rev. Leon-Hartshorn works across racial, cultural, and gender boundaries for the sake of building bridges inside and outside of the Christian community.

Please join us for this amazing day, April 8, 2015. Worship and Award Presentation at 11:00 am. Panel Discussion with past Race, Church, Change Awardees from 1:00-2:00pm.

See our Website, and feel free to nominate a “hero” of race, church and change in our faith communities: http://www.luthersem.edu/diversity/rcc_award.aspx

by Kyle Hanson
MDiv Junior

Ordination Equality



Earlier this week there was a group of college students visiting seminary as part of their discernment of a call to ministry. I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that 25 years ago I was in the same place. I was visiting Luther as part of an introduction

to ministry course that was meant to help us discern our call to ministry. I remember being so afraid during the visit; I was so frightened that someone would figure out my big secret, that I was Gay, and didn't belong there.

At the time the Lutheran church didn't ordain openly Gay people, and I am not sure that I would have even been accepted into seminary study. I had a clear call to ministry and I knew that the Spirit was pointing me toward the work of Christ, but the Church was telling me no!

Growing up in rural Minnesota in the 1970-80's wasn't always easy, and I learned very quickly how to hide who I was. I loved the church and loved the participation in the church, but I couldn't reconcile who I knew I was with what I knew I was being called to do. The church taught me that being Gay was wrong or sinful, and somehow I felt unloved by God. From the time of high school I can remember the elderly women of the church telling me what a wonderful pastor I would make, but they didn't know my secret. All through college I was feeling a tug to ministry, I sang, preached, and participated in outreach programs. I tried to study theology and still couldn't reconcile who I was with who I thought God wanted me to be. There was a period of time that I wasn't even sure I wanted to live.

After college I took a job as a youth pastor in a

metro church. It was during this time of employment that I also finally decided to come out to my family, friends, and my supervisors. Instead of finding the acceptance I thought would happen from the church, I was told that I couldn't continue to minister to the youth. I was heartbroken, not only because I loved what I was doing, but I couldn't explain to the kids why I was leaving. I lost my church home, my church family, and quite frankly my faith! While I knew my call was still there, I stayed away from a church community for many years.

Thirteen years ago I met my husband. At one of my visits to his home, I noticed the "Lutheran Magazine" on his desk. I was intrigued! Turns out that his mother, father, grandparents, sister, brother-in-law, and uncle are all Lutheran pastors. It seems that the spirit was once again trying to point me in the right direction. What I found in my new extended family and in my new church home was a place of grace that I didn't know existed. I found a welcome and an unconditional love from a church that was struggling to understand the ordination of GLBT people and working on justice issues. The ELCA finally moved toward ordination, and I was finally, after 25 years, able to come to Luther on my own terms, fully loved and called to the work of Christ. I am now legally married to my husband and raising a beautiful family.

What I have discovered on this journey is that unless you are shown and understand that the love of God really is for ALL people, unconditionally; and unless you accept the fact that you are loved, you really are unable to move the love of God forward. I am glad that I am finally able to become the person I was meant to be, and in turn move forward the work of the church. There are still struggles ahead, and congregations that won't call me because of who I am; but I know the Spirit is at work. There are currently 26 states that have proposed laws that allow businesses to refuse service to GLBT people in the name of religious freedom. We have come a long way, but have such a long way to go!

Interns Anonymous

Process:

Did you restrict? If so, what is your experience with that?

I did not restrict because I needed housing to be provided, which is the goal of such a rule. But I did indicate my desire to not stray too far away because of my relationship with my significant other in the cities.

Arrival:

What was the first week after your arrival like? How was meeting your supervisor?

The first week was crazy because of moving and settling and keeping up with new responsibilities. The congregation was very warm and welcomed me with open arms and a pantry full of supplies. My supervisor is an excellent mentor and has been a godsend.

Have you encountered any unexpected difficulties while on internship?

A doctor prescribed me some medication early after arrival, and its side effects caused a depression that I hadn't experienced since my teenage years. Especially worrisome, I began doubting myself in ministry and thought no one liked me. After two months, my supervisor made some unsolicited comments about me in a staff meeting in which he expressed his utmost confidence in me. That made me realize that the medicine was warping my sense of reality so I stopped taking it. Afterwards, my experience improved dramatically and I can't believe my first couple of months were so dreary.

Any positive surprises so far?

I can do this thing!
What are you glad you learned before you started, and what do you wish you would have learned or prepared for?

I'm glad about learning to think theologically. There is no single class that teaches that; it is some-

thing that happens through the course of all seminary work. For that I am grateful. Much of my own theological thinking developed, however, in the face of some instruction which seemed to reframe Scripture as a fallible product brought forth in spite of the Spirit. The kind of thinking that roots theology in a piecemealed Bible and sprouts from one's own subjective experiences is unhelpful in the parish. Either you point those in need of consolation back to themselves, or you point them to God and the Scriptures while feeling intellectually dishonest.

What has been the biggest difficulty so far? Anything that totally caught you off guard?

The biggest difficulty is worship planning. I've found that I have to assert myself and bring up ideas because none are asked for: they just want to do it the way they've always done it. At the same time, however, they are open to new ideas and do go with many of mine, but they're just as satisfied doing what they've always done.

Moving Forward:

Do you have any advice for those who are currently in the application process?

Interview your potential supervisors carefully. Watch out

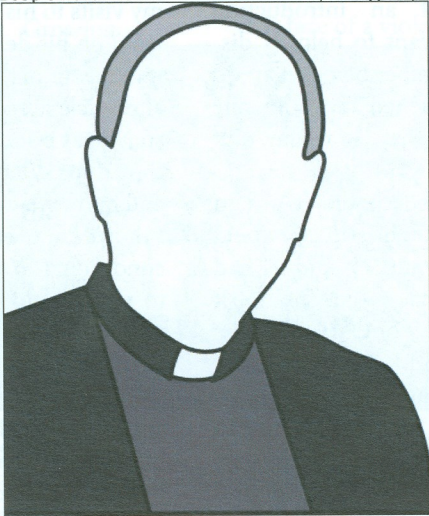
for those whose written descriptions don't match what they say in the interview. Be careful of those looking for their very first intern, especially if it's somewhere with an off-site supervisor: they may be unaware that they actually want an experienced pastor, not an intern.

Are there any resources you can recommend for dealing with the potential stress of applications?

Proverbs 3:21-26; 2 Timothy 2:8-13.

Any final remarks?

Live and let live. Easy does it. But for the grace of God. Think, think, think. First things first.



Look for the Dissonances: Confronting Sexual Violence in the Old Testament

by Cameron Howard

Assistant Professor of Old Testament



The Bible is filled with accounts of violence against women. Sometimes the text seems to endorse such violence or to view it as an acceptable punishment for promiscuity, as when Jerusalem is personified as a whore and is punished by being stripped and stoned (Ezekiel 16). When Jezebel, one of the most reviled characters in the books of Kings, is thrown to her death, the text almost delights in the complete desecration of her body in the street: “When they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands” (2 Kings 9:35). At other times a narrator clearly condemns certain acts of violence against women, such as the gang-rape of the Levite’s concubine (Judges 19) or David’s rape of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12). Even so, the narrative’s condemnation is often not rooted in concern for the personhood of the women as much as for community standards or the character of the man.

What should we, as Christian readers who care about the safety and bodily integrity of all people, do with these violent texts and this troubling Bible? Moreover, as Christian public leaders, how do we lead in ways that affirm the authority of Scripture but decry the sexual violence depicted in its pages? Although I cannot answer that question adequately in the words allotted to me here, I will propose a few preliminary suggestions.

First, *read the Bible*. It sounds obvious, but far too many of us—clergy and laypeople alike—do not have a sense of the fullness of what is in the Bible, particularly outside of the standard lectionary passages. When you explore Scripture’s dusty corners, you

are sure to find new texts not only that trouble you, but also that delight you. Moreover, reading the Bible regularly, preferably in larger chunks at one time, gives you a sense of the Bible as a whole: the forest, not just the trees. It is this wholeness with which we must ultimately contend, not scattered passages here or there.

Secondly, *read with both generosity and skepticism*. The Bible comes from a very different time and place. The people who wrote it had different ideas about what it meant to live faithfully—different than our ideas, but also different than each other’s. When circumstances changed, they had to reconfigure their assumptions, just like we do. Try to understand where those biblical voices were coming from. At the same time, don’t read so generously as to let the Bible off the hook. Rape is wrong. It was wrong then, and it is wrong now. The metaphor of Israel as promiscuous wife reinforces damaging ideas about women’s sexuality. Don’t explain away troubling portions of Scripture. Call them what they are. Trying to understand something (i.e., reading with generosity) is not the same as agreeing with it or endorsing what it says. Remember that the Holy Spirit is present in the reading of these texts, just as much as in the writing of them.

Finally, *look for the dissonances*. Scenes of violence against women are by no means the only places women appear in Scripture. Think of Deborah, the prophetess who judges Israel. Think of the lover in Song of Songs, who delights in the body of her beloved. Women in the Bible commit violence, too, against both women and men, though far less often than they are victims of it. Think of Sarah, who expels Hagar and Ishmael from her household. Think of Jael, who drive drives a tent-peg through Sisera’s temple. The story of women in Scripture is not monolithic. It is full of contradictions and dissonances. No single account has the last word, a circumstance that is sure to fill us with both consternation and hope.

Luther Seminary 13

Political or Pastoral?

by Sue Allers-Hattie

Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches CPE in Community Justice Ministries



Recently, I invited a CPE group via email to go hear a lecture at the U of M on the topic of mass incarceration. One student replied “Is that not political instead of pastoral?” I guess she did not sign up to be in Clinical Political

Education but rather Clinical Pastoral Education. One of my favorite Liberation Theologians Jose Bonino says that when we listen to subjugated voices it is a political act. Growing up in the Missouri Synod I was indoctrinated to talk to others and lead them to salvation. I was not taught to listen. When I began to read Tillich, I began to wonder how my life would have been different if sanctification was the goal instead of salvation. Tillich described sanctification as the process of increasing awareness... that leads to increasing freedom ... that leads to increasing relatedness (closeness to others) ...which leads to increasing transcendence (closeness to God). When those on the margins are listened into speech Bonino says it is an insurrection of subjugated voices. It is revolutionary.

Recently at the anniversary of the Selma March a young poet from Redeemer ELCA, Joe Davis, rocked the place when he continuously flipped words to catch us off guard and reconsider our interpretations...he reminded me of someone else who spoke in parables! The young poet challenged “Don’t pass the torch! Be the torch!... Don’t build a bridge, be the bridge!” But how do we get there?... how do we listen so deeply that the effect is profound and ignites the circular and contagious process of evangelism that shows up in authentic in-

spiration ...when you witness another telling his or her story ...and then the person sees the reflection on your face ...and the story becomes a torch you carry together. Listening can be a bridge we can use to get beyond a current struggle. When I was working as a chaplain in the jails in our metro people would ask me “How you can listen to the heinous offenders? How can you stomach it?” It was Sr Helen Prejean (portrayed by Susan Sarandon in Dead Man Walking) that helped me with this question so I could listen further. I heard Sr Prejean speak at a Restorative Justice Conference and she said that in the face of a violent person she asks herself: “What



could have possibly happened in this person’s life that he believed the decision he made was the best choice in that moment?”

I once heard Patty Wetterling, mother of Jacob who was abducted at age 12, say “We spend too much time tracking down sex offenders and not enough time looking at how we create them”. We moralize sex trafficking and incarcerate abused women. We fill our jails full of drug related offenders rather than getting people mental health services and addiction treatment. When we do not listen and care for children and teens who have been abused we grow bigger problems. I distinctly remember Alike Galloway, a womanist theologian and Pastor of Kwanzaa Presbyterian saying “What I know from seeing young men grow up in north Minneapolis is that many of the homicides are veiled suicides....” Who do we deem worthy of our listening and what is the impact on our world? Just this year in the US we did not listen to the cries of those dying from Ebola in West Africa until the disease hit our doorsteps... only then did we listen and respond. Listening is always a pastoral and political act. How to become a torch? How to become a bridge?

Ask a Biblical Character: Joseph

DEAR JOSEPH: I have been having some really crazy dreams lately. I feel like they might be predicting the future and, I'm not going to lie, I come out way better than the rest of my family. Do you think I should tell them? Or should I just let them be surprised? Please help me.

SEEING THINGS

DEAR SEEING: Congratulations on having visions. Not everybody has that talent. That said, of course you should tell your family! They will only be supportive of you. Who wouldn't be proud to have a seer in the family? Regardless of the content of your dreams and visions, sharing these things is important. And, if it is as you say, that your fortune turns out better than theirs, well then they should be happy for you. A visionary never lies, right? This will have nothing but positive outcomes for you, Seeing Things, of this much I am sure. What are they going to do? Kill you for having a vision? Of course not. Nobody is that jealous. Share your vision, my friend, no matter what.

Knowing that you will be well received, Joseph

DEAR JOSEPH: I think my boss's wife is hitting on me. She keeps grabbing at my garments and asking me to lie with her. I mean I'm pretty handsome and good looking, and I've got a pretty cushy gig here and I would hate to compromise it. Is there any chance I'm just misinterpreting her signals? Please tell me what I should do.

CONFUSED IN EGYPT

DEAR CONFUSED: Someone is awfully full of himself. I am sure you are misinterpreting her behavior. Why would she want to hit on you? Are

you the master of the house? Of course not. I think this is all in your head, Confused, and you should behave as such. Do not mention this to anyone, and if you think she is making these advances toward you again, simply turn around, run outside, and do not let your imagination run any further. Chances are it is all a misunderstanding and she wants nothing to do with you. Don't be so fanciful and you'll be less likely to get into trouble.

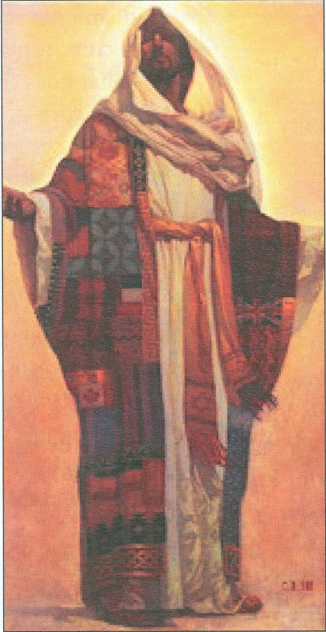
Keep your nose clean, Joseph

DEAR JOSEPH:My family and I parted on pretty bad terms. Recently I have seen some of them again, and I was wondering if you had any advice about how I should treat them. I mean, I'm upset and everything but most things turned out pretty good for me after our fight. What should I do?

PREPARING FOR A FAMINE

DEAR PREPARING: I think your course of action is clear. Confuse them! Do all sorts of crazy things that will give them mixed impressions of you. First, you can always accuse them of being spies. That sort of thing carries weight, you know? Then, give them a lot of food and don't let them pay for it. But you should insist that one of them stay behind as some sort of collateral. Maybe prepare them a really big meal, be merry with them, and then accuse one or more of them of stealing. It's the only way to begin any sort of reconciliation, in my opinion. No good things can come out of a lack of confusion, that's what I always say. So go ahead, be moody. Have a field day with it! Either way, you were probably in the right and they will come around, regardless of how you treat them.

Hoping you replace famine with fortune, Joseph



VOCA

by René Mehlberg
MDiv Junior



Very Obscure Clergy Association? Very Open Chanting Assembly? Versatile Obstinate Communion Arts? Are any of these what the Luther student group, VOCA, stands for?

Thankfully, no. VOCA is shorthand for “vocation”. VOCA’s mission reads:

Our mission, led by the Triune God and by the Gospel, is to love our neighbor by creating a space at Luther Seminary and within our community that seeks justice as an integral part of Christian vocation. (Voca).

I started attending VOCA meetings last fall as justice is a very important issue for me. Last year when I visited during Dokimazo, I had the pleasure of seeing a play regarding human sex trafficking that VOCA helped sponsor. It was very powerful and told a story that I’m guessing many do not know.

The beauty of this student group is that it’s led by its members and where the spirit is leading them. We’ve sponsored a speaker who was a reporter in Ferguson, who encouraged us to get involved in the fight against Ebola. This led to some members, including myself, to protest at the US Courthouse in Minneapolis, to encourage the US and the West to use its resources to truly fight the Ebola virus. It was a brand new experience for me and a very powerful one at that.

This semester some members participated in the “We March with Selma” at the state capital, and we’re one of the student groups helping fund many Sexual Assault Awareness Week Activities.

Additional events have included service projects, community engagement opportunities, partnership events, bible studies, and spiritual practices (centering prayer). But we want to hear ideas from others in the Luther community! What is on your mind on how to love our neighbor while seeking justice as part of our Christian vocation? Come let us know!

An Invitation to Act

by Katelyn Rakotoarivelo
MDiv Middler



The Dismantling Racism: Living into Beloved Community (DRBC) student group seeks to build relationships of trust by listening to one another so that we can learn to love one another across all barriers. We believe that, as people of faith, we must act compassionately and boldly

to dismantle racism in all sectors of life, especially our own communities.

What does this mean for Luther Seminary?

This spring, DRBC will offer opportunities for the Luther Seminary community to engage this question, both in our bi-weekly meetings and a few larger gatherings. In DRBC we emphasize the need for learning, reflection, and action. We cannot be silent and complacent in the midst of great injustice in our world.

In our academic setting, it can be far too tempting stay comfortable in the thinking and theoretical realms. While it may be easy to cognitively recognize that systemic racism persists, it is much harder to take action to dismantle this system and replace it with equity, equality, and love. While we may not change the world, we can make a difference where we are.

Our God is a God of liberating, empowering, and audacious love, and we are moved by this love to shape a world where all people can live into who they are, into their baptismal identity. Where systems of oppression inhibit this, we are called to take action.

And we must take action, starting with our own contexts. What does it mean for Luther Seminary to take action? What does it mean for us to admit our own participation in unjust systems? What does it mean for this community to courageously create space where diversity of all kinds is honored and engaged? Whatever your perspective, we invite you to be emboldened by God’s love and come to the table to help foster transformation in this beloved place.

**Dismantling
Racism:
Living into
Beloved
Community**

A Restraining Order Against Disabilities?

by Hollie Holt-Woehl
Pastoral Care Adjunct Instructor



A restraining order can be a helpful thing in certain situations where someone is feeling threatened and afraid. Yet, with all things in our fallen and broken world, helpful things can be turned into unhelpful things.

Several years ago there was a certain congregation who took out a restraining order against a mother and her son who has severe autism. The stated reason was that people were afraid of the teenager with autism. He was big, 225 pounds, had self-injurious behaviors, and experienced meltdowns when facing sensory overload or feeling overwhelmed. The pastor and a few parishioners were afraid the teen's behaviors might harm them. The mother felt the pastor was unwilling to learn about autism and work to make accommodations.

For the situation to get to the point of a restraining order shows a severe breakdown of communication which had been going on for a long time. This is an extreme example, but how many people in congregations would rather seek to bar people who are different than seek to work with them? Is it easier to put up barriers than minister to God's people with disabilities?

The field of disabilities is broad, including physical, intellectual, and anything else that doesn't "fit in" with the mainstream. The call for us, in ministry, is to seek to minister to all God's people - with all of their varied gifts and abilities. In reality, we may not be able to reach all of God's people, but we seek to minister to as many as we are able. When we come

up to a particular challenge in ministering with all God's people, it is time to seek the gifts of the people of the congregation. If we, personally, are not able to reach someone, we seek others who may have the gifts we do not. With creativity and empowerment we are able to minister to more people more effectively in community.

There may be members of the congregation who have a particular expertise in the field of intellectual or physical disabilities, or other areas which may be of help, and may be willing to share their knowledge and experience, or even lend their aid in ministry. Although professional expertise is not necessary, hospitality is. I have often found that in every congregation

there are those people who have a passion, or a welcome, or a "heart" for God's people with disabilities, they might not even know it themselves. I look for relationships. Who already knows and engages with the individual? To whom does the individual respond?

I think it is important to work with each person and family to seek the best way to minister. How do we help each other live out our faith and serve God and

our neighbor? What gifts do they bring to the faith community? What are they looking for in a worshiping community? What accommodations might be needed? What are their ideas for faith formation and service? There is no one right way when it comes to ministry with persons with disabilities. However there is a way that leads to helpful ministry with all God's people: a way of listening, a way of seeking to understand, a way of reaching out, a way of caring.

Resources:
Carter, Erik W. Including people with disabilities in faith communities: a guide for service providers, families, & congregations (Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co, 2007).
Newman, Barbara J. Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship (Wyoming, MI: CLC Network, 2015).



A Sacred Responsibility

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries” (1 Corinthians 4:1).

by Pastor Laura Thelander



This verse was on the bulletin cover for my ordination service. Along with the verse immediately following (“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” 1 Corinthians 4:2), it is one of the scriptural charges often read at services of ordination.

When I first heard this scripture passage at ordination services prior to mine, I was struck by the succinct and profound description of the call to ministry – the call to humble servanthood and awe-filled stewardship. In the years since my ordination, I have come to regard the second part of this charge, the call to be trustworthy, as even more significant for the life of ministry.

Ministry in the church has never been easy work. Pastors and professional lay leaders are called upon to juggle wide-ranging responsibilities and expectations and to develop and draw upon multiple intelligences. Pastors, especially in the Lutheran tradition, learn early on that Word and sacrament ministry is at the heart of our calling. But this call to be trustworthy, I would argue, is even more fundamental to our work and ministries.

Recently leaders of the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Indiana held a worship service in which they publicly accepted responsibility and apologized for John Howard Yoder’s sexual abuse of more than 100 women. Yoder, a well-known and well-respected Mennonite theologian, brought widespread prominence to his church and its tradition of peacemaking and non-violent Christian witness and action.

All the while Yoder was writing and arguing that God works through the nonviolent community of Christian disciples, there were growing allegations that Yoder was abusing women, but no actions were taken. Colleagues, friends, and institutions alike dismissed these charges or pretended that they weren’t that serious.

Now, decades after these allegations were first publicly acknowledged and over 18 years after Yoder’s death, one of the seminaries where this abuse took place has decided to take responsibility. The president of AMBS, Sara Wenger Shenk, offered a public confession and apology on behalf of the entire seminary at a service in the presence of women who had been victimized by Yoder. I encourage you to go online and read her statement. It’s a powerful witness and act of true confession and repentance.

In her apology, Shenk admitted that she struggled at first with the thought of confessing to something that happened long before she took office, “on someone else’s watch.” However, she began to realize that she must indeed confess and renounce the acts of evil that happened under the watch of the seminary. Trust had been broken.

Shenk declared: “Whether through misnaming, or negligence, or avoidance, or fear of scandal, we failed the sacred trust of the church. We failed what we know to be most true about the Gospel. We failed you. On behalf of AMBS, I express my profound remorse especially to each of you who were wounded in body, mind and spirit. I am sorry. I am sorry that trusted leaders injured, disregarded and devalued you.”

Shenk concluded her apology with these words: “We are not left without hope. We long for your restored trust, even on some distant day, for your forgiveness.”

Trust once broken is not easily regained, to be sure. But it begins with truth-telling. President Shenk gets it.

As we ponder Paul’s words to be trustworthy in our calling as servant leaders, perhaps we need to start with reflecting upon what it means to steward the trust given to us by others who view us as representatives of that which is of God and of God’s church. It is a sacred responsibility we have been given. May God grant us the wisdom, courage, and humility to be faithful to this calling.

Luther Seminary 18

What's Wrong with Rape?

The Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune

Marie Fortune is founder and senior analyst at FaithTrust Institute. She is a pastor, author, educator and practicing ethicist and theologian.

Fortune received her seminary training at Yale Divinity School and was ordained a minister in the United Church of Christ in 1976.

After serving in a local parish, she founded the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, now known as FaithTrust Institute, in 1977. She served as executive director until 1999.

FaithTrust Institute is a national, multifaith, multicultural organization providing religious communities and advocates with training, consultation and educational materials to address the faith aspects of abuse.



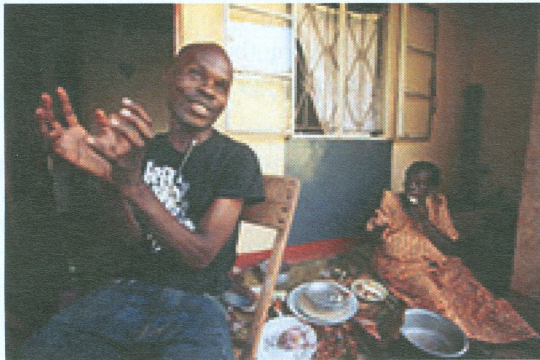
Tuesday, April 14 | 7 p.m. | Olson Campus Center

1490 Fulham St., St. Paul, Minn.

www.luthersem.edu

LUTHER SEMINARY

Call Me Kuchu - Screening & Discussion
Monday April 20th, 6:00pm
NW 100 Auditorium



Contact Megan Filer for more information:
mdahn001@luthersem.edu

Welcoming children and youth with disabilities presents both opportunities and challenges for faith communities. An interfaith, ecumenical conference, *Welcoming Everyone's Gifts: Equipping Congregations to Include Children and Youth with Disabilities*, will offer resources and strategies for staff, volunteers, and family members. The dates and times are Friday, April 17, 6:30-9:30 P.M. and Saturday, April 18, 8:30-1:00 P/M. Valley Community Presbyterian Church at 3100 N. Lilac Drive, Golden Valley, will host the event.

On Friday, *Creating a Culture of Inclusion* will feature keynote speaker and religious educator, Cindy Merten, and artist Sally Narr. On Saturday, participants will have the opportunity to choose two of these workshops: *A House of Prayer for All People*, led by Shelly Christensen, M.A. and Rev. Jo Claire Hartsig; *Children and Mental Illness: It's Not the End of the World*, led by Rev. Dr. Hollie Holt-Woehl and Nora Romness, M.A.; *All in the Circle*, led by Erin Pratt, M.A.; *Apples and Oranges: Thinking about Individualization, Collaboration and Creativity*, led by Jennifer Miller, M.A., J.D.

The event is presented by an interfaith, ecumenical planning team, the Resource Center for Churches, and the Disability Concerns Ministry of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. For more information go to

www.mnipl.org/programs/welcoming-everyone-s-gifts

Meet the Stu

CJ Boettcher

Hello! My name is C.J. Boettcher. I am an MDiv Senior in my final semester here at Luther. Last year I interned at a congregation in Everett, Washington and had an amazing ministry experience (not to mention my fair share of beautiful hikes and delicious seafood). I was recently assigned to the Northeastern Minnesota Synod head-quartered in Duluth. I am originally from Appleton, WI and enjoy fishing, canoeing, hiking, and frisbee. I am honored by the opportunity to serve on student council this year during such a formative time in the seminary's history. I have really enjoyed engaging in some core issues and giving voice to your concerns. It's been a fulfilling way to finish out my seminary career.



Kelly Sherman-Conrad

What can I say? This year has been a year for new adventures and making a difference in my life and my community. I excitedly began my studies at Luther Seminary in the Master's program for Children, Youth and Family. This is a step a long time coming! Along with my two-year-old son, Ciaran, we are settled in and enjoying this great adventure. I jumped right on in with being a part of Student Council representing the MA Juniors and it has been a blast getting to know everyone on campus.



A little bit more about myself, I have had 15 years in ministry with children and youth. I am a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in western South Dakota. I am the second oldest of six kids, my oldest brother Sean (The Sous Chef) lives here in the cities as well as my mother, Pastor Joann, who is also an Alumna of Luther. My father, Gerald, and stepmother, Jael, live in Red Lodge, Montana. I am also an amateur poet and hockey lover! Oh, and...GO YANKEES!!

I was a Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) and did 2 years of service in England. I loved it so much I stayed longer and worked as a Children, Youth, and Family Minister and continue to mentor young adults. Living in Europe opened up my love for experiencing what we have around us so I keep quite busy ex-

ploring locally. I have worked in a new start Native American Ministry where I went door-to-door looking for new members and children, traveled to Romania with Habitat for Humanity, stayed in a Buddhist Monastery in Scotland, and did a pilgrimage to Taizé, France. One thing that has grown stronger and stronger with every new adventure is my love for God and my wanting to help grow disciples of Christ.

You will quickly learn family plays a big role in my life; my personal family and my church family and now my Luther family. I have so many amazing people that I have learned from over the years and I am blessed to now call Luther my family.

dent Council!

Amanda "Ace" Aakre

My name is Ace and I am a Senior in the MA: Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Program. I currently serve as the Youth and Family Minister in Waconia, MN. I love the outdoors, a good adventure, and exploring wherever and whatever I can. In my spare time I climb trees, rocks, and other objects. Sometimes I run and other times I don't. I like to make cool things out of other cool things, I try to bring creativity to all I do, and I strongly believe that hospitality is always the right answer.

3 random facts about me:

- 1) I love tacos as much as I love air.
- 2) coffee is one of my main food groups!
- 3) I have a twin.



René Mehlberg

Hello! I'm René Mehlberg, the VOCA representative on Student Council. I am a first year MDiv on-campus student who has lived my entire life in Wisconsin. Many of you know me by my plethora of Badger wear and red rain-boots. In my previous career, I was in education (as a high school English and theatre teacher and then I worked for the University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H Youth Development programs in a variety of positions). In college my pastor encouraged me to think about seminary and the seed was planted. It just took 18 years for that seed to germinate and sprout. I decided to focus on my seminary education full-time and have moved to "Gopherland" to immerse myself in my studies and in the Luther Community. Three random things about me: I have been to 8 NCAA Frozen Fours (the National Championship of college hockey); I went to a three-room elementary school which is now a bar and grill; I am a volunteer with the Miss Wisconsin Scholarship Organization. And one extra: the picture of me is just before I started a glacier hike in Iceland. I'm thankful to be part of the Luther community and the student council.



Irene Amon

My name is Irene Amon. I am a MA Junior with CML concentration and I am from Ghana, West Africa. I am one of the MA Junior reps to the student council and a liaison to the faculty. I served as one of the directors of the youth and children ministries, a member of the prayer team, and as preacher of my church prior to my seminary journey at Luther. I love to experiment and learn new things and am ready to take up any challenge. I love listening to good music and to listen to people sharing their faith journey and how God has been faithful through it all. For that is the way I get encouraged not to look at the presence but the crown that awaits me and all who will come to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is my desire to go back to my country when am well equipped, to live out my call to serve for



Next Issue!

May is coming! Looking ahead towards the summer, the next school year, and all that 2015-2016 brings! We here at the Concord will have our new staff leading in our May issue, which includes our new Editor in Chief, Julia Olson! We're so excited to see what Julia, Eric, and Keyla can bring, and are in dire need of new faces and perspectives!

If you feel like you've ever wanted to write anything for the Concord (like ever), please feel free to contact one of us!

May's issue is going to be looking ahead - to mid-dler and senior years at Luther, to internships, CPE, and first calls - we want to hear from you! If you are interested in writing for our May issue let us know!

CONCORD STAFF

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Eric Christenson, Mary Dickman, Julia Olson,
and Keyla Spahr
Layout Editors:
Megan Filer
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Allyson Streed

The Concord is looking for new staff! If you are interested, let us know!
concord@luthersem.edu
No experience necessary! (Like REALLY!)

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Readers are encouraged to interact with the Concord in a variety of ways. Articles and "Letters to the Editor" are welcomed, as are less formal responses offered through the online version. All submissions should include the author's name, telephone number and, if applicable, class standing. Submissions should be received by e-mail. The managing editor reserves the right to publish, edit or disregard all submissions.